

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising a ~~an~~ polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide having at least 90% 95% identical identity to SEQ ID NO:2, wherein introduction of the nucleic acid into a plant to suppress gene expression results in earlier flowering in the plant compared to a plant not transformed with the nucleic acid.

8. (Currently amended) A transgenic plant comprising an expression cassette containing a plant promoter operably linked to the polynucleotide of ~~claim 1 or~~ claim 7, wherein the plant promoter is heterologous to the polynucleotide.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently amended) The transgenic plant of claim 8, wherein the polypeptide is set forth as shown in SEQ ID NO:2.

11-13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently amended) A method of decreasing flowering time in a plant, the method comprising introducing into the plant an expression cassette comprising containing a plant promoter operably linked to a polynucleotide ~~comprising at least 100 contiguous nucleotides of a coding sequence for~~ encoding a polypeptide having at least 90% 95% identical identity to SEQ ID NO:2, wherein the introduced DNA is expressed in the transformed plant to increase or decrease flowering time.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the polypeptide comprises ~~has~~ an amino acid sequence set forth ~~as shown~~ in SEQ ID NO:2.

17-19. (Canceled)

20. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein the expression cassette is introduced into the plant through a sexual cross.

21. (Canceled)

22. (Currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of claim 7, wherein the polypeptide comprises the sequence set forth ~~displayed~~ in SEQ ID NO:2.

23. (Previously presented) The method of claim 14, wherein the plant is a rice plant.

24. (Currently amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the polypeptide comprises ~~polynucleotide encodes~~ SEQ ID NO:2.

25. (New) The isolated nucleic acid molecule of claim 7, wherein the polynucleotide comprises SEQ ID NO:1.

26. (New) The isolated nucleic acid molecule of claim 7, further comprising a plant promoter operably linked to the polynucleotide.

27. (New) An expression cassette comprising a promoter operably linked to a heterologous polynucleotide comprising a nucleic acid having at least 95% identity to at least 100 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:1, wherein introduction of the expression cassette into a plant to suppress gene expression results in earlier flowering in the plant compared to a plant not transformed with the nucleic acid.

28. (New) The expression cassette of claim 27, wherein the nucleic acid comprises at least 100 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:1.

29. (New) A transgenic plant comprising the expression cassette of claim 27.

30. (New) The transgenic plant of claim 27, wherein the nucleic acid comprises at least 100 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:1.

31. (New) A method of decreasing flowering time in a plant, the method comprising introducing into the plant an expression cassette comprising a promoter operably linked to a heterologous polynucleotide comprising a nucleic acid having at least 95% identity to at least 100 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:1.

32. (New) The method of claim 31, wherein the nucleic acid comprises at least 100 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:1.